DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 841 SP 036 608

AUTHOR Russell, Phillip; Harris, Larry B.
TITLE Creating a Systemic Transformation of Pre-Service Teacher Preparation.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (St. Louis, MO, February 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Educational Assessment; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Faculty Development; Higher Education; *Partnerships in Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Professional Development Schools; Program Development; School Restructuring; Schools of Education; Student Recruitment; *Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Reform Efforts; *University of Arkansas Monticello

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the history and continuing story of the complete transformation of the teacher education program at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Among the transformation factors are: professional development of faculty on all levels; recruitment, admissions, and retention; curriculum and instruction; internships and professional development schools; and assessment. The transformation involved working closely in collaboration with the public schools of southeast Arkansas in joint program sessions and retreats. One of the big changes is that teacher education faculty must now participate in the daily lives of schools and children through involvement in classrooms and staff development exchanges. Standards for admission to the education program have increased to include assessments of basic skills, increases in grade point average, and an interview process. Additional funding has been secured for recruiting new students, especially minority group students. Students planning to teach at the secondary level must now complete an academic major in an academic discipline, in addition to teacher education requirements; students planning to enter elementary education complete a major designed specifically for them. The professional education curriculum has been significantly redesigned into a series of integrated and cohesive experiences, including active learning and participation. Graduation from the program now includes a set of standards, in addition to course requirements, that involve knowledge, skills and dispositions, using portfolios, simulations, interviews, observations, and written evaluations. Future developments will include opportunities for continued growth and development using technological advances appropriate for the teaching and learning process. (NAV)

ED 393 841

Creating a Systemic Transformation of Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

Phillip Russell & Larry B. Harris

School of Education

University of Arkansas at Monticello

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Russell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A Paper presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the

Association of Teacher Educators

St. Louis, MO

SP036608

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The School of Education at the University of Arkansas at Monticello has been engaged in a total transformation of the teacher preparation program. Among the transformation factors are: professional development of K-16 faculty; recruitment, admissions, and retention; curriculum and instruction; internships and professional development schools; and assessment. A history of the transformation process is presented. The results and continuing direction of the transformation are also presented.

Creating a Systemic Transformation of Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

Increasing discussion is occurring related to the restructuring of schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDEs) to enable them to support the work being undertaken in public school reform (Clift, Veal, Johnson, & Holland, 1990; Winitzky, N., Stoddard, T., & O'Keefe, P., 1992). Effective educational reform requires that SCDEs undergo radical, systemic, and systematic changes similar to those being undertaken by public schools. The Holmes Group (1986, 1990) has called for reforms in the preparation of teachers similar to those being pursued in public education. Goodlad (1990, 1994) proposed 19 postulates which, if implemented, will create environments conducive to preparing more effective teachers. Among these postulates are ones which relate to closer collaboration between an institution of higher education (IHE) and local education agencies and the development of the means to assist all children in their learning. A key ingredient in the reform of preservice teacher preparation is the development of collaborative endeavors between K-12 educators, teacher educators, and arts and sciences faculty in the IHE.

Educational reform in Arkansas has been continual for the past decade or more. This reform has assumed many guises and has been largely directed by legislative mandate, Department of Education rules, and an honest interest in improving the quality of education for all children. Arkansas educators have seen competency testing mandated for certified teachers (Act 350, 1985 General Assembly) the recognition of NCATE as the sole accrediting body for all of teacher education (Dept. of Education Memorandum 86-34, 1986), the retraining of teachers for more effective instruction (e.g., Statewide Systemic Initiative for

math and science reform), and linking curriculum, assessment, and professional preparation and development to learner outcomes as required by Act 236 of 1991. This Act requires reform at all levels of education. Teachers and schools must develop curriculum frameworks for all subject areas; specific learner outcomes have been approved; licensure standards have moved from course-driven inputs to demonstrable standards; professional development requirements have been increased. Act 236 has impacted not only public education but also the schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDEs) that prepare future teachers. SCDEs have been required to establish authentic relationships with public schools through collaboratively designed K-16 partnerships.

Background of Restructuring at UAM

The University of Arkansas at Monticello is a small, comprehensive institution serving the Mississippi River delta region of southeast Arkansas. A primary mission of the University is to provide teachers to the schools in the region. The University embarked on a set of endeavors in recent years to strengthen the schools in the region while simultaneously renewing the preservice teacher education program. A grant from the Rockefeller Foundation allowed the University and regional public schools to engage in an examination of the teacher preparation program and to plan for an enhanced program for the preparation of all teachers. In addition, the faculty from the School of Education participated in a week-long retreat to begin operationalizing the recommended changes. The Chancellor of the University, the Dean of the School of Education, the faculty in teacher education and the arts and sciences, and the public school teachers and administrators have demonstrated a strong commitment to creating

changes in the way both preservice and inservice teachers are prepared to meet the demands for teaching in an impoverished region with its concomitant problems. The results of these efforts have led to the development of a new model for the preparation of teachers.

Initial Steps in the Transformation Process

UAM has had a long history of collaboration with the public schools of southeast Arkansas. Since 1968, the Southeast Arkansas School Study Council has brought administrators of area public schools and UAM faculty together on a monthly basis to discuss and gain information regarding pertinent educational issues. This organization has served to help create the idea that UAM and area public schools are partners in improving public education.

In 1987, the Umbrella Committee on Teacher Education was formed by the Head of the UAM Department of Education to provide a forum in which problems and potentials of the teacher education program could be discussed. The committee included public school teachers and administrators as well as UAM Department of Education and arts and sciences faculty. Periodic meetings of this group provided information and suggestions concerning needed changes in the teacher education program.

A major event in the movement toward a closer working relationship between the University and public schools was "Conversations on Teacher Education," a meeting of a large number of representatives from the public schools and the University, held on the UAM campus in 1992. Several recommendations for the improvement of teacher education resulted which provided an impetus for future transformation efforts. These included the establishment

of equal partnerships between the University and public schools, regular team teaching/exchange by University and public school faculty, the development of "laboratory type" schools for field experiences, and the creation of a year-long , 4th year internship experience.

Just after the "Conversations on Teacher Education" session, the University received the aforementioned Rockefeller Grant to plan for the transformation of the teacher education program. The central ideas providing the focus for this reform effort came from John Goodlad and his book entitled Teachers for Our Nation's Schools (1990). Goodlad called for Universities and public schools to form collaborative partnerships to simultaneously renew both teacher education and public education in the United States. Superintendents from eight area school districts met on campus to discuss the restructuring process. University personnel, including the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, made site visits to each of the eight schools to discuss possible plans of action.

As a result of these discussions, it was determined that formal partnerships between the University and the public schools should be established. In 1993, a Dean was appointed for the newly created School of Education (supplanting the Department of Education). The Dean has actively encouraged the continuation of the reform process through the establishment of collaborative partnerships with area public schools. For example, as a result of the Dean's leadership, the Southeast Arkansas Center for Educational Renewal was established in 1993. This center formalized the commitment between nine area school districts and the UAM School of Education to strengthen both the public schools and teacher education in southeast

Arkansas. Public school and University faculty and administrators are represented on the board and task forces of the Center. The purpose of the Center is to provide recommended plans of action to the School of Education and partner schools. Task forces dealing with curriculum, technology, entry to exit, professional development schools, and induction have provided extensive recommendations. Many of these ideas are presently being implemented.

Recent Impetus for Transformation

Participants in the renewal effort have met in settings removed from the UAM or public school campuses more recently. For example, the School of Education faculty and one public school teacher met in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1994 to develop a model for a transformed teacher education curriculum. This discussion focused on how to implement ideas from previous recommendations. Emerging from this week-long retreat was a conceptual outline of a radically different curriculum.

A second retreat, involving a larger group of participants including public school, teacher education, and arts and sciences faculty was held in 1995. This meeting was designed to acquaint participants with the teacher education transformation movement, to enhance communication across all levels of schooling, and to make plans for the creation of professional development sites in partner schools.

Since the 1995 retreat, work has continued through various faculty committees including faculty development, curriculum, technology, and assessment. Plans have also been made with partner districts to establish professional development schools. The Dean, along with education faculty and participants from the pilot PDS, have been visiting potential sites

throughout the partner districts to assist in this creation.

Transformations

Professional Development of K-16 Educators

The preparation of future educators is an endeavor which encompasses the entire educational community and others. Communication between and among the faculty in the School of Education, arts and sciences, and public schools has been enhanced through various activities including the retreat mentioned earlier. Faculty from all areas have developed an open line of communication which has led to a strong working relationship and a level of trust which has not existed previously. All of the faculty have had to be a part of the vision of themselves as equal partners in the preparation of teachers.

With the advent of other changes, faculty have also had to begin developing new roles. No longer can a higher education faculty member stay solely on the campus teaching classes and conducting research. Now, these faculty are participating in the daily lives of schools and children through involvement in classroom settings and staff development opportunities. As these roles continue to change and grow, the School of Education faculty will develop deeper relationships with both the arts and sciences and the public school faculty.

An additional component in the professional development of all faculty has been the learning of new knowledge regarding effective and best practice. The faculty responsible for the on-campus instruction of preservice educators have participated in staff development activities with public school faculty and vice versa. This has led to a more authentic teaching role for university faculty.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention

Future teachers have often been viewed as being less academically capable than their peers . The standards for admission to the preservice preparation program have increased to include assessments of basic skills, increases in grade point average, and the inclusion of an interview process with a team of faculty including teacher education, public school, and arts and sciences.

The School of Education and the partners are currently creating a tiered admissions process which will require increasing levels of performance throughout the student's preparation. Included in this will be grade point averages which will require that students continue to perform at high levels. Also, students will have to demonstrate specific performances which are indicative of effective teaching. As the School of Education and the partners develop the preservice preparation program, the performance indicators and the placement of the performance assessments are being developed.

In addition to admission requirements, the recruitment and retention of students into the preservice preparation program have been modified. A grant for recruiting minority freshman and sophomore students was secured. This grant allows the School of Education to work with three community colleges in attracting minority students into teacher education. The grant provides a stipend, assistance in career/academic counseling, and initial professional development during the first two years of the student's higher education career. The School of Education is committed to attracting these students to the campus and assisting them in entering and graduating from the teacher education program. The School of Education has set a goal of

increasing minority participation in the preservice preparation program to 35%. This will have the School of Education closely aligned with the percentage of minority students in the regional public schools. It will further set an appropriate example for the other units on the campus.

Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum for the preparation of future teachers is one which encompasses three separate components of the total university curriculum: general education, academic disciplines, and professional education. In recent years, the general education curriculum has been modified to include an emphasis on both humanities and sciences. Students in all disciplines are expected to develop a strong understanding of the humanities which undergird our society. They are also expected to be knowledgeable of basic scientific concepts. Those planning to teach are required to enroll in additional general education courses which further develop their understanding of the American heritage and of society in general. The general education curriculum also requires that students develop a strong global perspective such that they can be successful citizens in a world which encompasses more than a small piece of Arkansas.

Each student planning to teach at the secondary level must complete an academic major in an academic discipline. This major does not differ from that completed by the student's colleagues who are not planning to teach. Those students planning to enter elementary education complete a major designed specifically for them. The elementary education major includes 12 hours of mathematics, 15 hours of sciences, 18 hours of social and behavioral sciences, and 27 hours of humanities and arts. These hours are all taught in the academic disciplines, not in the School of Education. A prospective elementary educator develops a strong undergirding of the

subjects taught in the elementary school and explores several areas in some depth.

The professional education curriculum for all prospective teachers has been significantly redesigned. What once was a series of courses with some inter-relatedness has become a series of experiences which are developmental, integrated, cohesive, and deliberate. Every experience in professional education includes a technology component which builds from word processing and e-mail usage to the creation of optical disks for storage of data. Each component requires that students develop an increasing awareness of multicultural issues and teaching strategies. Each portion of the program leads students into a deeper understanding of the psychological and sociological underpinnings of learning. Both university and public school educators work together to provide instruction for preservice teachers. Rather than a university professor merely discussing how to teach a certain way, students have the opportunity to meet with teachers who are incorporating these techniques. They have the opportunity to work in those teachers' classrooms as well.

Instruction in the transformed professional education curriculum has taken the role of active learning and active participation. Students are expected to be active searchers after knowledge about children and youth, content, communities, and society. The instruction includes team teaching, field based and university based opportunities, learning centers, and other methodologies. If a methodology is taught, it is modeled in several places.

Professional Development Schools and Internships

A major component of the transformation has included developing authentic relationships with restructuring public schools. The School of Education has been instrumental in developing

a strong K-16 partnership which has included developing public schools to serve as professional development sites. The professional development schools provide the settings for the early field based experiences and also serve as the locations for a year long internship.

The culminating experience in the professional preparation program has become a year-long internship. Students are assigned to the professional development setting for a full, public school year. They follow the same schedule as the teachers in the public school. During the internship year, the interns work closely with a clinical instructor who is also a public school teacher. The clinical instructors are responsible for teaching the specific methodologies related to teaching certain disciplines. These clinical instructors are assisted by a university faculty member. This person helps to plan the delivery of instruction for the interns through seminars, observations, and other means.

Interns are required to participate in the planning and delivery of lessons, communication with parents, classroom management, discipline, and additional classroom responsibilities. The internship has become an opportunity for both the intern and the clinical instructor to develop skills in team teaching.

Assessment System

Under previous models, exit from the program was determined by the completion of a specified number of courses and the student teaching "block". The new model for professional preparation incorporates a set of standards which must met prior to exit. These standards involve knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The assessment model provides the opportunity for the preservice teachers to demonstrate their ability to provide instruction, guide student learning,

maintain a positive classroom environment, communicate effectively with parents and others, etc. The assessment outcomes utilize standards being developed by groups such as INTASC and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. University faculty and public school faculty have developed the procedures for assessing these outcomes and recommending interns for licensure.

The new assessment model incorporates the use of portfolios, simulations, interviews, observations, and written evaluations. As the state requires standardized tests (NTE and PPST), these are incorporated into the evaluation process. Additional assessment activities are conducted at the time of admission to various stages of the program. The performance assessment system is designed to be developmental.

Future Directions

Continued development

The professional development of K -16 educators will include opportunities for continued growth and development as educators. Technological advances which relate the teaching/learning process will be incorporated into the development of these persons. Effective teaching strategies will continue to be a part of the professional growth. Opportunities for continued learning will be sought and implemented. Joint staff development experiences are being created.

Recruitment, admissions, and retention strategies are being created and refined. Among these are the development of Future Educators of America chapters in the local high schools, the creation and implementation of a summer camp for prospective teachers, and scholarship

opportunities for graduating seniors from professional development school districts. Advising and support mechanisms within the School of Education are being strengthened to ensure that all preservice teachers have the opportunity to succeed and become high quality educators. Minority students who are recruited are being counseled and supported throughout their professional preparation program through small group seminars, financial assistance, and personal guidance.

The curriculum of the transformed program, while in its infancy, is undergoing continued scrutiny to ensure that the preservice educators are receiving the appropriate content and strategies for effective teaching. The arts and sciences components are being strengthened to include more specific content knowledge related to the subjects being taught. The professional education components are being strengthened through more reliance on working with master practitioners and university faculty who are knowledgeable of current best practice in the public schools.

The professional development school concept is being spread throughout the partner districts. Additional school sites and clinical instructors are being identified and developed. The selection and placement of interns is becoming more rigorous. Interns must participate in an extensive application and selection process including interviews, demonstrations, and simulations.

An assessment process is being developed which will require prospective teachers to demonstrate competencies in knowledge, skills, and dispostions related to teaching. This assessment system will incorporate the use of observations, simulations, interviews, portfolios,

and examinations. While it will be structured around the Arkansas standards, it will also prepare the preservice teachers for the National Board Assessment in the future.

Effective networking and professional growth for graduates

The University and the public schools are committed to assisting beginning teachers throughout their professional career. This is especially important during the first three years of teaching. The University is developing a computer and human resource network which will provide assistance and guidance during those times. The intent of the networking will be to share successes and overcome difficulties.

The NCATE New Professional Teacher Project will become a part of this activity. The University can only prepare teachers to a certain degree in an undergraduate program. The continued professional growth of teachers is a joint responsibility between all of the partners.

Conclusions related to Transformations

The process of transforming teacher education appears simple on the surface. However, when a group of educators from all levels and backgrounds come together to agree to bring about change, the process is complex. One soon finds that potential solutions encompass more than one aspect of the program. Changes in admissions also require subsequent changes in the curriculum. Increasing requirements in field based experiences require professional development of the K-12 educators. Changing patterns of assessment force a program to examine critically the goals and expectations previously established.

In order for a SCDE to undergo a radical transformation requires the development of authentic relationships and trust with both arts and sciences colleagues and public school

educators. After years of suspicion the development of a common agenda can become difficult without a willingness to communicate openly. The transformation process hinges on the creation of authentic channels of communication.

A vision for the future must be created, shared, and adopted by all of the constituencies. This vision must guide the transformation process through both the ups and the downs. A persistent attitude of accomplishment must permeate all of the parties.

The educators responsible for the development of the professional preparation program must view the transformation as a continual opportunity for growth and exploration. As new techniques, methodologies, and knowledges are developed room must be found for their incorporation in the program. The transformation process is continual and does not lead to an ultimate end.

References

Clift, R., Veal, M.L., Johnson, M., & Holland, P. (1990). Restructuring teacher education through collaborative action research. Journal of Teacher Education, 41, 52-62.

Goodlad, J. (1990). Teachers for our nation's schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Goodlad, J. (1994). Educational Renewal. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

The Holmes Group. (1986). Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group. East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.

The Holmes Group (1990). Tomorrow's schools, Principles for the design of professional development schools. East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.

Winitzky, N., Stoddard, T., & O'Keefe, P. (1992). Great expectations: Emergent professional development schools. Journal of Teacher Education, 43, 3-18.